

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully acknowledges receipt of the Office Action mailed on May 15, 2008.

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 11, 20, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Hrupp* (U.S. Patent No. 6,223,818); objected to claims 12-19, 21, 22, and 33 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims; and allowed claims 23-28, 30, and 32.

By this Amendment, Applicant amends claims 11 and 13, and cancels claim 12, without prejudice or disclaimer. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 11, 13-18, 20-28, and 30-33 will be pending. Of these claims, claims 11, 23, and 27 are independent.

The originally-filed specification, claims, abstract, and drawings fully support the amendments to claims 11 and 13. Accordingly, Applicant believes that no new matter has been introduced.

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 12-19, 21, 22, and 33 if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Consequently, Applicant has amended claim 11 to include the feature of allowable claim 12, and has cancelled claim 12. Accordingly, independent claim 11 is in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 13-18, 20-22, 31, and 33 are in condition for allowance at least due to their dependence from independent claim 11.

Applicant also acknowledges the Examiner's allowance of claims 23-28, 30, and 32.

Applicant traverses the rejection above and respectfully requests reconsideration for at least the reasons set forth below.

I. 35 U.S.C. § 102 REJECTION

Claims 11, 20, and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by *Hrupp*. Although Applicant does not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejection, Applicant has amended claim 11 to include the feature of allowable claim 12. It is that feature which the Examiner admits is not disclosed in either *Hrupp* or any other prior art of record. (*Office Action*, p. 3, paragraph 3).

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of claims 11, 20, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) be withdrawn.

II. CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 11, 23, and 27 are in condition for allowance. In addition, claims 13-18, 20-22, 24-26, 28, and 30-33 are in condition for allowance at least due to their corresponding dependence from claims 11, 23, and 27.

The Office Action contains characterizations of the claims and the related art with which Applicant does not necessarily agree. Unless expressly noted otherwise, Applicant declines to subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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